

## Letter to the Community # 4

4/14/2020

Happy Tuesday! Our weather has been great, and I hope everyone was able to enjoy it in one way or another. One of my dearest friends had a milestone birthday this weekend. As tempting as it was to go join my friends for a party, we did a virtual birthday party instead to make sure we all stayed safe. We did a scavenger hunt which was a huge hit!

It has been four long weeks of staying home with our partners and kids 24/7. I think many of us have a greater appreciation for teachers and schools. Others have turned “Staying home, staying healthy” into a wonderful opportunity to be creative with communications through the internet, letters, and even the good old telephone. I see a lot more families out taking walks together while practicing social distancing from friends and neighbors. Reaching out and connecting with friends and family is so important!

While it is great seeing people taking care of their physical needs, mental wellness is every bit as important as physical health. If this current situation is affecting you negatively, please find the resources you need to cope. You can find [mental health and coping resources](#) on our website.

**What is the current status of COVID-19 in Thurston County?** In the past week, the number of new cases reported have slowed down to just a few each day. We are continuing to monitor the status of our hospitals and long-term care facilities to meet the health needs of our community. Public Health staff conduct investigations for all positive cases, and their identified contacts. In more recent cases, they are identifying fewer contacts due to the social distancing and staying home restrictions. Folks are following the recommendations!

We have added recovery and hospitalization numbers on the [PHSS COVID-19 webpage](#) so you can have a better picture of what’s happening in the community. Recovered means persons who have been released from Public health monitoring, who are well, or who are continuing to recuperate at home. If you want more details, there is a [data page](#). Because we have more cases, we are now able to share more information without releasing identifiable information. The data we have only includes persons who are symptomatic, tested, and reported as confirmed positive.

Thanks to all our sacrifices, we are doing well, and the temptation is there to get relief from all the restrictions, but there is a danger to lifting restrictions too early. We know that political leaders and health officials are discussing and planning for the “best timing”. Whenever restrictions are lifted, we can expect a rebound increase in cases. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, and as long as the virus continues to spread anywhere, it can be reintroduced back into our community.

As we begin our recovery process, the lifting of restrictions will be gradual. I suspect we will continue to recommend teleworking as much as possible, social distancing, and hand hygiene. This will be part of our “new normal” for a while.

Thank you so much for doing your part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community! Just like with any disaster, there will be a long period of recovery. We are working on those plans now. I am hopeful we can start that process soon!

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